

PREFACE.

THROUGHOUT the formative period of our national life Thomas Jefferson stood second only to Washington in power and influence; after the death of Washington, for a quarter of a century, the will and words of Jefferson were supreme in American politics. After his death the spirit of Jefferson lived on, and to-day millions of men regard him as the greatest prophet of government and expounder of human rights that the world has produced.

An inquiring mind, doubtless, desires to know the exact nature of the teachings of one who has so profoundly affected society, desires to read the precise words of his doctrine. But it is not an easy matter to satisfy this desire. The doctrines of Jefferson are scattered through many costly volumes that are to be found only in favored private libraries or in centers where there are large public libraries. It is the purpose of this volume to put the teachings of Jefferson within the reach of all. His voluminous correspondence and numerous State papers have been examined and wherever a significant passage or an important official document has been found it has been classified and placed in this collection. Nothing that has point has been, omitted.

For the purpose of making the writings more serviceable and intelligible a Life of Jefferson has been prepared. In this biographical sketch the aim has been to avoid controversy, abuse and eulogy, and to state the facts in a fair, non-partisan manner.

The portion of the Life beginning with Jefferson's career in France and continuing to the end has been written by Dr. W. A. Montgomery, of Arkansas College, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

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